No Place for a War Baby
The Global Politics of Children Born of Wartime Sexual Violence

Donna Seto
NO PLACE FOR A WAR BABY
Gender in a Global/Local World
Series Editors: Jane Parpart, Pauline Gardiner Barber
and Marianne H. Marchand

*Gender in a Global/Local World* critically explores the uneven and often contradictory ways in which global processes and local identities come together. Much has been and is being written about globalization and responses to it but rarely from a critical, historical, gendered perspective. Yet, these processes are profoundly gendered albeit in different ways in particular contexts and times. The changes in social, cultural, economic and political institutions and practices alter the conditions under which women and men make and remake their lives. New spaces have been created – economic, political, social – and previously silent voices are being heard. North-South dichotomies are being undermined as increasing numbers of people and communities are exposed to international processes through migration, travel, and communication, even as marginalization and poverty intensify for many in all parts of the world. The series features monographs and collections which explore the tensions in a “global/local world,” and includes contributions from all disciplines in recognition that no single approach can capture these complex processes.

*Previous titles are listed at the back of the book*
No Place for a War Baby
The Global Politics of Children Born of Wartime Sexual Violence

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In this latest volume of the Gender in a Global/Local World series Donna Seto analyzes how children born of sexual violence during wartime are rarely the subject of international relations (IR) theory – in particular feminist IR theory – and existing children’s rights regimes. She argues that these children, created from a strategic use of (sexual) violence during war, are highly politicized subjects, yet they continue to be marginalized in humanitarian programs not just in academic literature. Recent examples of such practices of wartime sexual violence abound and include conflicts in the former Yugoslavia (in particular in Bosnia-Herzegovina), Rwanda, and more recently Darfur.

While IR theory has been mostly concerned with issues of war, peace, and security it has predominantly done so from a state-centered perspective. The end of the Cold War provided new openings and “opportunities” to decenter the hitherto state-centric perspective, and re-orient the study of war and security toward a more human-centered approach, as exemplified by critical security studies. Although critical security studies has been criticized by feminist IR for not adequately addressing gender-related security concerns, the “encounters” between the two subfields have resulted in a rich and booming literature on gender and war, peace and security, especially related to post-Cold War conflicts. Contributions by feminists include studying war rape as a strategic weapon in “ethnocide”, whereby women are seen as the boundary-ma(r)kers of ethnic groups and their (wartime) rape serves to reduce the group’s ethnic integrity. In these analyses women are often constructed as victims. In contrast, other analyses go beyond a “women as victims” approach and address women’s active involvement in war, peace and security. Such studies include women as perpetrators of violence, for instance as soldiers and in guerilla movements, but also focus on women as important actors in post-conflict reconstruction and peacemaking. Such a role has been ratified by United Nations Security Council’s Resolution 1325 (2000), which underscores women’s contributions in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, as well as peace negotiations, peace-building, and peacekeeping, and, finally, in humanitarian aid efforts, as well as in post-conflict reconstruction. As contributions to this series confirm feminists have also been concerned with the constructions of masculinity in war and the military.

Although wartime rape is a topic addressed by feminists, babies born as a result of such rapes have not received much, if any, attention. As Seto shows, even humanitarian programs addressing children’s needs in conflict zones do not
recognize war babies as a legitimate subject of attention. While, humanitarian programs are concerned with child soldiers, child refugees and child laborers, war babies are not included in these programs. Seto suggests that the discursive construction of children is based on the assumption of innocence and victimhood. And, while war babies can obviously not be held responsible for their existence, their identity is nonetheless constructed as representative of the enemy (of the community and the nation), which undermines their supposed innocence and makes them highly politicized subjects. As their presence is often rejected or silenced by the community, ethnic group, or nation to which the mother belongs, humanitarian intervention on behalf of these vulnerable children is extremely difficult. In her conclusion, Seto calls for a reconfiguration and redefinition of the identities of these war babies, which would shed them from their enemy-related identification. In other words, she suggests that communities, as part of their post-conflict reconstruction efforts, need to re-visit their rejection of children born of wartime sexual violence.

Hence this volume addresses a very complex and highly politicized issue. Making children born out of wartime sexual violence visible may also inadvertently affect their mothers who have remained silent on the issue because of possible repercussions from within their communities and families. Seto’s contribution, however, seeks a delicate balance between the importance of making these children visible and addressing their needs, on the one hand, and respecting the needs and concerns of the women who have been wartime rape victims on the other. With her study, Seto unravels the many layers and complexities surrounding the identity construction of war babies and, in so doing, uncovers an important silence in feminist IR theory and children’s rights regimes. As such, No Place for a War Baby is an important reading for academics and practitioners alike, and a significant addition to the series.

Marianne H. Marchand
Jane L. Parpart
Pauline Gardiner Barber
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Donna Seto, Vancouver, February 2013
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## List of Abbreviations

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUD</td>
<td>Australian Dollars</td>
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<tr>
<td>AI</td>
<td>Amnesty International</td>
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<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome</td>
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<td>AWF</td>
<td>Asian Women’s Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus</td>
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<tr>
<td>HRW</td>
<td>Human Rights Watch</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICTR</td>
<td>International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda</td>
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<td>ICTY</td>
<td>International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia</td>
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<tr>
<td>INGO</td>
<td>International Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>IR</td>
<td>International Relations</td>
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<td>IUCW</td>
<td>International Union for Child Welfare</td>
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<tr>
<td>LILA</td>
<td>League of Filipina Grandmothers</td>
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<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>SS</td>
<td><em>Schutzstaffel</em> Guards</td>
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<tr>
<td>TWRF</td>
<td>Taipei Women’s Rescue Foundation</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNCRRC</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<td>UNIFEM</td>
<td>United Nations Development Fund for Women</td>
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<td>WCIP</td>
<td>The War and Children Identity Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>WWI</td>
<td>World War One (1914–1918)</td>
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<td>WWII</td>
<td>Second World War (1939–1945)</td>
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To war babies everywhere
Introduction

“Faisal changed my life. Because of him I am sick. Because of him my life is ruined” (Polgreen 2005). These words were uttered by Ashta in 2005, a thirty-year-old mother residing in the Al Riyadh refugee camp located on the border of Chad and Sudan. Until recently, the Janjaweed, literally translated as the “devil on horseback”, has ravaged Sudan’s south-westerly region of Darfur (Bashir and Lewis 2008, Amnesty International 2004a, 2004b, Matheson 2004). The Janjaweed had subscribed to a campaign of sexual violence as a strategic means of inflicting terror, shame, and long-term suffering on a community that has traditionally protected female chastity. Ashta was raped by members of the Janjaweed as she tried to flee her village. The rape left Ashta pregnant with an unwanted child. She gave birth to Faisal nine months after the assault. Her child is among the hundreds of babies produced by the use of sexual violence in the conflict that plagued Darfur. Anecdotal evidence provided by local midwives and aid organizations has indicated that there were two dozen babies of rape born in Al Riyadh refugee camp in early 2005 (Polgreen 2005).

Darfur is not the only community dealing with the consequence of children born as a result of wartime sexual violence. An orphanage in Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina, houses the consequences of a systematic campaign of wartime rape and forced impregnation. At face value, these children do not appear to be that different from other children. However, their ages and ethnicities reveal that they were a part of the campaign to produce “Chetnik” children during the 1992–95 Bosnian conflict (Saunders 2006).1 During the conflict, sexual violence occurred in prison camps, safe houses, and schools that were turned into centers for rape (MacKinnon 1994, Niarchos 1995). Similar to the conflict in Darfur, the rapes were encouraged as a strategy for instilling long-term forms of suffering and social humiliation in the Bosnian community. Some of these children were conceived in state-sanctioned

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1 The implication that the Serbian military was responsible for the rape of Bosnian-Muslim women is not to suggest that either ethnicity is solely to blame for the violence that occurred in the former Yugoslavia. Sexual violence was used as a form of intimidation and as a means of instilling terror. Thus, both groups of women were subject to forms of sexual violence. Anecdotal evidence also indicates that men were also subject to sexual or gender-based violence during the 1992–95 conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This discussion of the use of sexual violence is not meant to essentialize the experience or to indicate that a specific ethnic group has been responsible. Rather, it seeks to illustrate the complexity of sexual violence in conflict and the difficulty of explaining it by recourse to simple oppositions.
circumstances under a policy of forced impregnation where the birth of children of the enemy was a strategic method to instill further terror and suffering in the opposing community. Other children who were the result of mass rape understood to be an inevitable consequence of war. Despite the difference between a state-sanctioned case of forced impregnation and individual cases of rape in war, the ill-treatment of children born under such circumstances is similar across the world.

Darfur and Bosnia-Herzegovina are not isolated cases where children were born as a result of militarized sexual violence. The creation of children of war, whether as an accidental by-product or a strategic campaign of violence, has historically accompanied the cycles of war and peace. In a political climate where rape has been used as a strategic method of war, children born of sexual violence have become an increasingly visible issue. In the past two decades, wartime sexual violence has been recognized as a crime against humanity and a war crime (Green 2004, Hansen 2001, Niarchos 1995). Despite the recognition of wartime sexual violence, the international discourse has “so far proved inadequate in formulating a response to the children born as a result of such attacks” (Watson 2008: 1).

Available research concerning this particular group of war-affected children suggests that there is a lack of systematic fact-finding or humanitarian programs that adequately addresses the needs of children born of wartime sexual violence on a global scale (Carpenter 2007a, 2010). As a group, children remain under-represented within mainstream explanations of international politics. Yet, more specifically, children born of wartime sexual violence are rarely mentioned at all.

Aim

By positioning children born of sexual violence as a central point of enquiry, this book questions why this specific group of war-affected children has been missing from the study of international politics. This book positions itself at the beginning of questioning where the children born of wartime sexual violence are in the study of International Relations (IR), and more importantly, ask why have these children been missing from the existing studies of wartime rape and children’s rights regimes. In doing so, this book takes the reader through a study of some of the main theories within the field of international politics to search for how these children might be considered. The purpose of questioning where these children are provides the impetus to revealing what the exclusion of children born of wartime sexual violence might say about the contemporary methods of understanding warfare.

Created from the strategic use of violence in war, children born of war are cloaked in the intricacies of politics. At the very least, children born of war have come to symbolize the anxiety and complexity of contemporary conflict. They act as symbols of violence where they remind their community and their mothers of what occurred during war. In contrast to children who are directly or indirectly affected by conflict, the detriments experienced by children born of wartime sexual violence cannot be easily defined. Unlike other groups of war-affected children, the
suffering of children born of wartime sexual violence often occurs after conflict has formally ended. Positioned as a postscript of conflict, children born of wartime sexual violence suffer from a long list of abuses that are difficult to summarize through the available discourse on human rights. For instance, the identities of children conceived of wartime sexual violence are constructed based on violent modes of “personalized warfare” such as forced impregnation, sexual violence, and militarized sexual exploitation. These practices employ the psychological and emotional aspects of conflict while also involving complicated issues relating to identity, gendered expectations, and memory (Edkins 2003, Agamben 1999, Ross 2003, Salzman 1998). As a consequence, the suffering experienced by these children is an intrinsic consequence of the climate of conflict and, often, their own identities.

Despite their politicized identities, the discipline of IR has been unable to accommodate these children as subjects of political inquiry. Prided in its study of war, security, and prescriptions of peace, IR’s focus on state-behavior has left little room to explore the subject of children born of war. Even within the sub-disciplines of international politics, such as feminist IR, children born of wartime sexual violence remain bystanders to discussions concerning war and sexual violence more specifically (DeLaet 2007, McEvoy-Levy 2007). As a consequence, children who are born as the result of wartime sexual violence have typically remained as ciphers: as instances among many by which to reflect upon the torture, trauma, and humiliation that the war-affected woman had experienced. This discussion has rarely included the experiences and interests of children who are born under such circumstances.

This book also finds that children born of wartime sexual violence are marginalized within the children’s rights programs concerning war-affected children. Despite the emerging research concerning child soldiers and refugee children, children born of wartime sexual violence largely remains a non-issue in humanitarian circles. It is questionable whether if more work is to be included on children would they become part of the larger discussion concerning international politics. This exclusion of children born of war from existing studies of war-affected children means that they are left out of the international humanitarian discourse concerning children. Whereas other war-affected children have been discussed in studies of contemporary conflict, the issue of children born of wartime sexual violence has not adequately been addressed (Carpenter 2007b, Watson 2007). On occasion, they surface in the news or humanitarian reports concerned with the disaster of modern warfare. But rarely are the voices and the experiences of this particular group of war-affected children heard in mainstream IR, feminist IR and the children’s rights regime. Most often, these children exist on the margins of societies ravaged by war, remaining unheard in circles of child support.²

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² The book will consider specific cases of children who have been ostracized, including instances in which children have demonstrated the agency to break out of their marginalized situation. The author argues that although cases exist in which children have been able to grow up without being aware of their origins and live relatively normal lives, their example cannot effectively be isolated from their ill-treatment.
The absence of children born of war from the discipline of International Relations proves curious. This book will explore how these children have fallen between the analytical gaps of two of the most relevant approaches within global politics: feminist International Relations and children’s human rights regimes. The purpose of concentrating on feminist contributions to IR as well as children’s rights regimes is to highlight if these fields – which have concentrated on war rape and children – can accommodate children born of war as subjects of enquiry. Upon initial speculation, the author finds that children born of wartime sexual violence are often silenced, ignored, and, at best, embedded within the footnotes of feminist academic texts that discuss the occurrence of sexual violence in war. Although feminist efforts have brought international attention to the issue of war rape, it questions why the discourse has ignored the experiences of children born of war. In doing so, this book argues that despite the debates within feminist approaches to IR, the focus has often been on the war-affected woman rather than the child.

Definitions

The topic of children born of wartime sexual violence, an issue that has largely been relegated to the margins, is ambitious. Thus, key terms need to be addressed in order to set the boundaries of this book. At the center of this book are questions concerning ontology and epistemology which help to identify the background of concepts such as women, gender, sexual violence, children, and childhood. Accounting for the realities we define for ourselves and the knowledge we create helps us to understand how issues are formed, why particular topics receive attention whereas others are silenced, and who is behind the frameworks and perspectives that are applied. Understanding the background of concepts and frameworks reveals that they are socially contingent and applied for a political purpose rather than something that can be considered to be natural and unchanging (Alexander 2005, Wibben 2011). This process of interrogating underlying structures suggests that an understanding of a subject is never far removed from the political process that defines it (Cox 1981). In saying this, this book will primarily explore four key terms: ontology, epistemology, sexual violence, and children born of wartime sexual violence.

The study of ontology can be defined as what we understand as knowledge and its relationship to the world. Ontology shapes or categorizes the different criteria that determine how theories come to frame knowledge conceptually (Weldon 2006, Ackerly, Stern, and True 2006). For instance, it shapes how we understand wartime rape, children, and what is important to our theoretical enquiry. Thus, ontology refers to the categories we form in order to map the world intellectually. They are the “starting points” that researchers use to construct knowledge related to a topic (Ackerly, Stern, and True 2006, Steans 2006). This book approaches ontology as a contested state of inquiry. Here, ontology is structured within a historical timeline as a concept, or a set of concepts, that have an origin as well as a purpose. This understanding of ontology also suggests that the way we come to understand the
world is based on a particular perception that is both context-specific and dependent on a particular idea of the world. Thus, ontology cannot be considered as an uncontested truth, rather it fluctuates with history, geography, and time.

Epistemology refers to the study of how theorists go about acquiring knowledge. In short, epistemology is how we know things and come to ask the theoretical questions that accompany research. It is important because it shapes the practice of knowing, how we come to acquire such knowledge, and the methodology used to produce knowledge. In Ann Tickner’s words, methodology is thus epistemology in action (Tickner 2006). Epistemology is key to the study of children born of war as their absence from the study of international politics is based on the conceptual neglect of certain studies of international politics. As will be explored in more detail in Chapter Two, positivist methods of enquiry such as those adopted by mainstream IR have excluded subjects that are not compatible with their idea of politics (that is children). Knowledge we develop is fundamentally shaped by the questions we ask (and do not ask), and by what we consider interesting and important (Enloe 2004a, Foucault 2000, Butler 1999, Wibben 2011). Methodology is our approach to developing knowledge. Typically, methodology has been used to question whether the researcher engages in qualitative or quantitative methods, or what particular methods one should use to examine a specific question (Weldon 2006). Bringing epistemology into the light helps to locate the researcher and to suggest that research is never far removed from the subject that is studied. In saying this, it is implied that research is framed through the preferences and the background of those who do the questioning.

The subject of epistemology deals with the creation and dissemination of knowledge that is used in select contexts and areas of theoretical enquiry. Whereas ontology is what we know, epistemology is how questions shape the practice of knowing. This practice of acquiring knowledge is the basis on which we reason with the understanding of the world (Tickner 2006). It demonstrates that the way in which practitioners do their research is predicated on particular understandings of what concepts are important, what questions are asked, and what are the most appropriate methods of conducting research. An enquiry into how ontological concepts and epistemological approaches are considered allows researchers to understand that there are often different and conflicting modes of questioning (Smith 1996). Ontological and epistemological considerations are central to this book because they determine if and how children born of wartime sexual violence are conceptualized in global politics, and offer the tools with which these children might be re-conceptualized.

This book recognizes that ontology and epistemology fluctuates through the eyes of the researcher. Rather than considered as something that is set in stone and identified as a world truth, epistemology and ontology are understood as maps or guides in which to tell a story. However, like maps, the ideas of ontology and epistemology are created and accepted by a particular group and should not be considered as static-unchanging truths. In saying this, this book recognizes the vulnerable position the researcher positions herself in. As an individual curious
about the war, the author is not immune to recreating a hierarchy of concepts that define what is subject to research and what is not. However, the author also recognizes that this study of war represents the beginning of a study that includes children and children born of war more specifically. In doing so, the author engages in the process of questioning a field that has traditionally relied on static, unchanging terms.

One particular term that needs clarification is children born of wartime sexual violence. The *War and Children Identity Project* (WCIP) has been at the forefront of producing information on the issue of children born of wartime sexual violence. The WCIP was initiated in Bergen, Norway in 2001 and has collected data on children born of war at a global level. Its data provides a basis for quantifying how many children of war exist around the world. Subsequently, the WCIP has published three separate reports on cases of war children around the world (Grieg 2001, Kartveit 2002, Ophaug 2003). The reports define a war child as “a child that has one parent that was part of the army or peace-keeping force and the other parent a local citizen” (Carpenter et al. 2005: 3–4). R. Charli Carpenter, who has written extensively on the topic, has defined this group of war-affected children in a similar vein. She writes that children born of war can refer to “persons of any age conceived as a result of violent, coercive, or exploitative sexual relations in conflict zones” (Carpenter 2007b: 3). Thus, this definition includes cases of children who are born as the result of rape and sexual slavery by members of a militarized institution, as well as from sexual exploitation by occupation forces, peacekeepers, humanitarian workers, and private militaries (United Nations Security Council 2000, 2008, Human Rights Watch 2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2007b, Amnesty International 2004, Refugees International 2005, Allred 2006, Csaky 2008). Although the definition of war children proposed by Carpenter and the WCIP is broad, it does help to highlight the complexity of militarized sexual violence that occurs in conflict and how cases involving relations with peacekeepers, prostitution, and rape can sometimes be difficult to differentiate in a militarized climate (Enloe 2000, Whitworth 2004).

The category of children born of wartime sexual violence can include those who are born to a mother who had “sexual encounters” with members of a foreign or local military force. This book recognizes the possibility that female members of the military may mother children of local fathers, either through love matches or militarized sexual violence. There have been cases where women who have engaged in acts of violence or are members of the military who have given birth to “children of the enemy” (Carpenter 2006a, Enloe 2004a, MacKenzie 2009). However, this book focuses on the category of children born of wartime sexual violence from a civilian mother and a member of a foreign or local military force. The reasoning behind using this particular definition is because it builds upon existing research concerning wartime sexual violence (Grieg 2001, Carpenter et al. 2005, Carpenter 2007a). The literature on wartime sexual violence has focused on the experiences of the victim. In this sense, framing a child born of wartime sexual violence within literature on sexual violence allows further questioning of existing
debates (Skjelsbæk 2006). This concept also explores the complexities behind the experiences of war-rape survivors. Such issues include how forced impregnation affects the rape survivor, how children born of wartime sexual violence alter the climate of war, and the political agency of the rape survivor. Thus, for the purposes of this book, children born of war will primarily refer to those who are born to a local woman and a member of a foreign and occupying military force.

Scope

In order to accommodate the task of uncovering discursive silences, this book primarily engages in post-structural feminism as its theoretical point of enquiry. A post-structural feminist query allows for an examination of existing ontological and epistemological biases. Theorists that engage in a post-structural perspective ask questions concerning where knowledge comes from, who defines the boundaries of what is considered the truth, and how it has come to be accepted. The perspective of postmodernism permits a space to unravel the underlying questions that surround accepted knowledge. For instance, post-structural feminists may question the mainstream approach of Realism by unraveling who created it, how it has come to be accepted as a universal tradition, and who is excluded when it is used as a method of engagement. In doing so, feminists who engage in post-structuralism are able to uncover the power dynamics that sustain Realism as a central tenet of understanding IR while also noting who may be excluded from the discourse when certain frameworks of knowledge dominate. Thus, post-structural feminism permits a theoretical space for a questioning of how identities are constructed, excluded, and legitimated.

While a post-structural feminist perspective remains the preferred approach, this book nonetheless recognizes the limitations within the theory itself. For instance, one such limitation of post-structuralism is its lack of priority in seeking to provide durable solutions to a specific issue. In essence, at the center of a post-structural approach is the process of questioning where knowledge originates and how it is sustained by a set of power relations. Although this process helps to uncover the limitations that are part of existing traditions of knowledge, post-structuralism fails to provide a viable set of answers beyond the task of questioning. As a result, a post-structural approach often leaves the weary researcher within a theoretical cul-de-sac where questions concerning epistemology and ontology are followed by another sequence of questions concerned with the origins of knowledge and power relations. Although post-structuralism has been known to drive conceptual conversations to a state of nihilism, for the purposes of questioning the limitations of mainstream IR it provides a useful tool to understand where knowledge comes from and for what purposes it aims to serve.

Embedded within the issue of finding a space for children born of wartime sexual violence is the problem of identifying the complex identities which define this particular group of children. Post-structural feminism, with its attention
on deconstruction, is able to unravel historical and material consequences that have resulted in the mistreatment of this category of war-affected children. For instance, with reference to child-centric institutions, a post-structural feminist approach will uncover how norms are created to sustain a specific international standard of childhood. Devices used to enforce this include: international rights regimes, humanitarian organizations, and liberal frameworks used by governing institutions. Concurrently, this theoretical approach also reveals how existing ontological concepts discipline or control those who do not conform to the norms (Foucault 1977a, 1997, Butler 1999, Agamben 1998, Edkins and Pin-Fat 2004).

Engaging with a post-structural feminist approach also allows for an exploration of how we understand the identities of children. Post-structural feminism engages with the deconstruction of identities, how they are framed, and by whom. Thus, understanding children within this framework contextualizes questions by reference to the multiplicity of familial relationships, rights to citizenship, community and national identity. In doing so, this book engages in the processes of genealogy (Foucault 1977b, 1997, 2000, Hansen, 2006, Shepherd 2008, Wibben 2011). Genealogy shows how specific academic discourses emerged not as a neutral result of scholarly enquiry, but as the direct consequence of power relations. In short, power is implicit in all knowledge systems, such that notions like reason or truth are the products of specific historical circumstances. This book engages in the processes of genealogy for the purpose of uncovering how specific frameworks within IR have developed. More specifically, it will deconstruct feminist discussions of wartime sexual violence and children’s human rights regimes. By doing so, this book attempts to uncover reasons why children born of wartime sexual violence have not been addressed in either field. This enquiry into relevant fields of research attempts to build a space in which the rights of children born of wartime sexual violence can be addressed.

Children born of war remain one of the most vulnerable groups of war-affected children. Although emerging work concerning war-affected children has dealt specifically with child soldiers, child refugees, and child laborers, research concerning children born of war remains sparse. This particular group of children embodies the detriments experienced by other groups of war-affected children. Similar to child refugees, children in this group are stateless. But unlike refugees who once belonged to a state, children born of war are often born without membership to any country (Carpenter et al. 2005). Children born of war may be exposed to circumstances similar to those that mobilize children to participate in war as soldiers, sex trade workers, or laborers (Refugees International 2008). Thus, the detriments experienced by children born of war have the capacity to place them in situations more precarious than other war-affected children.

Investigations into the issue of war babies also allow researchers to question the legitimacy of norms concerning childhood, rights regimes, and humanitarian institutions. Although existing regimes and institutions aimed at protecting children profess sincere intentions, the approaches which they employ can limit their effectiveness. For instance, the children’s rights regime aims to protect children
worldwide. However, despite the near universal ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, children born of war remain absent from its protections (Daniel-Wrabetz 2007, Mertus 2007). The existence of this particular group of children brings into question the feasibility of these rights regimes. These children demonstrate that in order to be a recipient of such rights one has to be a member of a state (Arendt 1967).

More importantly, children of war embody the complexity of identity and belonging. Their existence reminds us that identity is politically constructed, fluid, and subject to constant redefinition. Although these children are not any different from other children, they are perceived to be. On the one hand, their identities are constructed as a method of war. These children are produced to bring further shame to the victimized community: they remind the nation of the horror of defeat and are perceived to identify with their “enemy” fathers. On the other hand, this identity is frequently instilled in the child after the hostilities of war. Their identities are constructed based on the identities of the parents and has very little to do with the child. With this said, the child demonstrates how our identities can also be subject to redefinition (Butler 2009, 2004).

Research concerning survivors of wartime sexual violence and their children is difficult to conduct. This particular area of enquiry is cloaked in silences and enshrouded in unequal power relationships. Such power relationships occur between the researcher and her subject as well as the interpretation of both primary and secondary sources. Due to the sensitivity of the subject, this book relies on anecdotal research produced from autobiographies, news articles, films, and reports published by non-governmental organizations. It also relies upon existing literature written on children and global politics. In doing so, this book builds on existing enquiries that question why the needs of this specific group of children have not been addressed as part of the study of global politics (Carpenter 2007, 2010, Watson 2007).

There are several methodological difficulties this book reflects upon. First, the sensitivity surrounding the issue of wartime sexual violence provides methodological difficulties for the researcher. Sexual violence is often enshrouded in ideas of collective and personal shame as well as humiliation. Conducting research that involves survivors of sexual violence may bring attention to the identities of these women and their experiences. Contrary to existing research on the subject, survivors of sexual violence often rely on silence as a method of protection (D’Costa 2006). Thus exposing the identities of these women for the sake of research can be detrimental to their livelihood. Moreover, the identities of women and the politics surrounding wartime sexual violence are closely tied to the construction of national identity (Yuval-Davis 1997). Any attempt to conduct research in this area requires attention to how national identities are shaped through women’s bodies, reproduction, and the treatment of these women vis-à-vis their children.

Secondly, it is difficult to compile quantitative data involving survivors of sexual violence. Estimates of the number of women who have experienced sexual violence are mostly anecdotal. Quantitative data produced about this topic is
dependent on news reports, statistics compiled by humanitarian aid organizations, medical evidence provided by doctors, and government reports. Moreover, in cases where sexual violence occurs in conflict, state governments have been adamant in either not disclosing or exaggerating the number of women who have been subject to rape (Carpenter 2010). Nonetheless, sexual violence in conflict remains under-reported. The lack of adequate evidence regarding rape is invariably due to the sensitive nature of the issue. Women often conceal the evidence of its occurrence. As mentioned, victims often do not reveal that they have been raped. This makes it difficult to gather quantitative data concerning the number of women subject to sexual abuse. The sensitive nature of the subject also makes it difficult to determine the exact number of women who were pregnant and gave birth to children born of sexual violence. Despite the limitations of available quantitative data on the subject, the estimates provided by non-governmental organizations, medical centers, and government authorities suggest that the issue is widespread and systematic.

The turbulent nature of conflict makes acquiring evidence difficult. Often evidence has been inadvertently destroyed by war or deliberately concealed for political reasons. War also obstructs the capacity to find evidence about these children. Many war children are not formally registered (Grieg 2001, Carpenter et al. 2005, Refugees International 2008). During war, the facilities that normally ensure that children who are born are registered are often not available (Amnesty International 2004b, 2007). While it is often the case that evidence concerning children conceived and born of war rape is known to exist but remains difficult to access, the prior hurdle of evidence being recorded in the first instance is frequently never overcome. Children conceived of war-rape experience a number of detriments that prevent their voices from being heard. Revealing that they exist provides tangible evidence of wartime rape and impregnation. For reasons of personal and familial safety, of avoiding ostracism, and for many other reasons which this book will encounter, women and communities have often concealed that these children actually exist. In many cases mothers may not want to register a child of sexual violence. In doing so, she admits that the act of rape occurred and that the child exists. Both the rape and the child can detrimentally affect the survival of the woman (Carpenter et al. 2005). Moreover, children who were adopted, placed in institutions, or in orphanages may not be aware of their true identities. As a result, official statistics concerning sexual violence and children born of war are difficult to uncover (Carpenter 2010, D’Costa 2008).

Finally, for the reasons noted above, it is impossible to map the individual experiences of these children. Many of them share similarities in terms of their experiences within their communities, and in their interaction with states and international legal structures. With that said, it is important to recognize that the capacity of each child to address or confront these issues individually is unique. This book does not suggest that all children born of wartime sexual violence are the same, or that they will feel or experience their political lives the same way. Instead, it recognizes that each child’s relationship to his or her mother and her family, each child’s attitude to her father and her experience within her community, constitute
the human relationships that are undeniably complex and context-specific. While that may be the case, it is nonetheless important to understand, highlight, and analyze the challenges that each child faces.

Primarily, however, this book is committed to opening up a theoretical space in which to honestly discuss the precarious situation faced by children born of wartime violence. While it recognizes the enormous difficulty of this task, it also suggests that this issue has for too long been silent. The detrimental effects that it has – not just on children, but on their mothers and communities – should not be allowed to continue. Resolution of this issue will require the commitment, the changing of attitudes, and, in some cases, the fundamental reshaping of a number of entrenched political practices. This book positions itself as contributing to the beginning of that project.

**Outline**

This book is structured in seven chapters. Although each chapter stands alone as an individual piece, they are also situated together to ask the question of why have children born of wartime sexual violence been missing from existing studies of war and peace? In saying this, Chapter One addresses some of the key cases of children born of war and suggests that these children have been an intricate part of modern warfare. Chapter One provides an outline of the different groups of children born of wartime sexual violence from around the world. In presenting a variety of different cases this chapter highlights that this is a holistic issue that cannot be isolated to one specific area or conflict. Chapter One can be treated as a reference guide that helps to introduce the subject of children born of war. Seeing as children born of wartime sexual violence has largely been excluded from existing studies of war, this chapter offers itself a chance for readers to begin theorizing why these children have been missing from the larger discourse.

Chapter Two engages with some of the major contributions feminists have made to the discipline of IR. It will mainly focus on three feminist frameworks: liberal feminism, standpoint feminism, and post-structural feminism. There are two reasons feminist theories are explored: first, because they can help to question the ontological and epistemological foundations of mainstream IR and feminist theories; and second, they help to build a space in which to question why feminist discussions have not been able to accommodate the subject of children born of wartime sexual violence. As will be discussed, feminist IR is not a homogeneous field but a field that has evolved through internal debates and dialogues. As a result, more critical approaches of feminist IR, such as post-structural feminism, can help to deconstruct existing theories, such as liberal and radical feminism, and programs of action.

Chapter Three applies the frameworks presented by feminist theories to the issue of wartime sexual violence. The purpose of exploring different feminist theories is to expose the knowledge gaps concerning wartime sexual violence and
conflict. It will ask questions concerning how issues are framed, what questions are asked, and what is excluded in giving preference to one framework over another.

Chapter Four situates war-rape survivors as existing within conditions of “bare life” and observes that the recognition of sexual violence does not always engender emancipatory possibilities. In doing so, the chapter concentrates on the Asian comfort women issue to illustrate how post-conflict modes of reconciliation have continued to alienate war-rape survivors. This chapter engages in an in-depth analysis of how particular frameworks of understanding wartime sexual violence can continue to marginalize survivors and their children.

Chapter Five traces the history of how the concept of childhood was framed. In doing so, it will explore historical concepts of childhood offered by John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and then develop these concepts by reference to contemporary theorists dealing explicitly with the issues of children and war, including David Archard, Helen Brocklehurst, and Alison Watson. Through an exploration of childhood as a concept, this chapter asks the question: can children born of war rape fit within the existing concept of childhood? What do children born of war reveal about the existing understanding of childhood?

Chapter Six elaborates on the concept of childhood by exploring its use in the children’s rights regime. The intention of this chapter is to survey the extensive list of rights outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. In doing so, it argues that the UNCRC relies on the idea that “all” children are guaranteed a specific set of rights: children born of wartime sexual violence are one example of how specific groups of children are not included within the UNCRC’s protectionist regime.

Finally, Chapter Seven explores the role of humanitarian aid agencies and their programs dealing with war-affected children. The purpose of this chapter is to question how childhood or children’s identities are framed by humanitarian organizations. It argues that some humanitarian organizations associate all children with passivity in order to operationalize a projection of victimhood. However, groups that do not fit into the stereotype of a victim are often excluded. It will illustrate how children born of war are unable to fit within the advocacy agendas of child-centric humanitarian organizations.
References


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